

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

BY JOHN G. GIVEN.]

EBENSBURG, THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1851.

VOL. 7.—NO. 16.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Dodge's Elopement.

BY FALCONBRIDGE.

[THE hero of the following narrative is Ossian E. Dodge, the celebrated Boston Vocalist, who paid \$625 for the first ticket to Jenny Lind's first concert in Boston.] Dodge, the eccentric and unequalled delineator; or, as the ladies call him, "the incomparably ugly man," appeared "on change" again last week; and the next evening after his appearance, at Miliken's fashionable saloon—Dodge's headquarters, was at an early hour densely crowded with the "members of the order," to listen to the rib-ticking account of the many incidents ever to be met with in the life of a Concert Singer.

Many a time, and oft, have we shaken our sides with uncontrollable laughter, as the tormenting sentences of dry and spontaneous wit fell from the lips of the joker, as unconcerned and as careless as drops of spray from the overhanging cliffs at Niagara.

But few, however, of the many rich things related by him in our presence have left the laughter in us, like the following; but in order to be fully appreciated, the readers should see Dodge tell the story.

Dodge, some years ago—about the time he quit teaching the art of wax and flower making, and, fortunately, took up that of concerting, at which profession he has, according to repute, amassed an independent fortune—made a break across the mountains, and one fine morning found himself in the city of Cincinnati.

Here he took passage in the afterward unlucky steamer, the B—S—, bound down to Memphis, Vicksburg, Natchez and New Orleans.

The boat was densely crowded, being stowed full on deck with agricultural implements, horses, cord wood, Dutch emigrants, and other hardware; while the cabin overhead was filled up with trunks, band-boxes, carpet bags, umbrellas, gals and boys, men and women, and such like plunder.

The boat shoved off, fired her whistles, and away she headed down stream, while her old pipes breathed forth a cook, cook, cook, which fairly caused the surrounding hills to echo again.

After supper, Dodge having, by letter of introduction, made the acquaintance of a very useful personage, the captain of the boat, they arm in arm, took a peep into the ladies' saloon; it was quite full and one of the ladies was playing a piano elegantly, while some others, having a greater taste for vocal than instrumental music, were humming over a few of the late fashionable productions of Balfe, Dempster, Glover, and other eminent composers.

The captain and Dodge stood for some time in respectful silence, when the lady at the piano very politely requested aid to assist her in that glorious soul-exhilarating never-fading old duet, the "Canadian boat song."

This was Dodge's cue; he very readily stepped forward and begged permission to lead off.

"If you please, sir," said the lady, whose angelic voice, Dodge vows nearly took away his breath. Our hero pitched into the "Boatman" like a load of coal, and says that, united with the angelic voice of the Mississippi nightingale, he fairly made "Rome howl."

After the Boatman, came a few selections from the operas lately published, and the night new being far advanced, to wind up, Dodge was obliged to favor the ladies with a trip to Niagara Falls.

"Old fellow," said the Captain, meeting Dodge in the social hall about midnight, "you got along swimmingly among the ladies—why, you sing like a bird."

"O yes I sing a little," said Dodge.

"And egad, you thumbed that lady's guitar into fits!"

"Well, I rather guess I did torture some," replied Dodge; "but tell me, Captain, who is that lady dressed in black, that sings like a nightingale, and plays with the finish and perfection of a professor?"

The Captain (being a noted wag, and the terror of all jokers on the Mississippi river), suddenly conceived the idea of selling the Yankee with a joke which should come "high" among the New Englanders, in ages to come, as a model "sell."

"That lady, my dear fellow, is a widow," "You don't say so!" said Dodge.

"Yes, but I do, though, and, more than that, she's rich! rich as mud, sir—rich as mud! worth seventy-five thousand dollars! young and beautiful, into the bargain!—a good chance for a Yankee boy, just commencing in life, like you sir!"

"She's certainly very beautiful," said Dodge.

"Beautiful as an angel," said the Captain.

"A very fine musician, too," replied Dodge.

"Unequaled on the river," rejoined the Captain; "sir she sings like a seraph!"

"How long has she been a widow?" inquired Dodge.

"A little over a year now, since her Captain was placed under the sod."

"Ah! then her husband was a Captain, was he?" said Dodge.

"Yes, he was a Captain, but he got blowed up, poor fellow! This steam-boating is a risky business for a man that cares anything about life, sir! risky business; but then if you get the widow, and you can do it, sir, like a knife, if you only cotton up strong enough for she likes you anyway; I saw it in her eye—you can retire on some large plantation, and spend the rest of your days in indescribable luxury."

"Well, Captain, hang me, if I ain't a mind to spread myself for the young widow, and try my hand at courting for the first time in my life."

"Go it, my boy, I'll back you with all my influence; if I wasn't already a married man, I'm surely go in for that charming woman; but you'll win—young—good looking?"

"Don't, don't, if you please, Captain."

"Hang it, Dodge, don't be so modest!"

"But, Captain, gas, soap, putty—think of my feelings!"

"Then you sing and play like a book; the widow loves music, she loves music to distraction; and now, my boy, strike while the iron is hot! Why, sir, if I could sing and lead the guitar equal to you, I'd—"

"Hold on, Captain, hold on; I understand all about that; but now tell me all about the young and beautiful widow, give me her name, age, and residence."

"Her name," replied the Captain, "Amarantha Bronson, age, about twenty-four; residence New Orleans, and as we shall probably be about ten days running down, you'll have a fine chance to exert yourself; so now take my advice, and make the best use of your time."

"I will," says Dodge, and he didn't do anything else; for, always having an eye open, his suspicions were aroused by the Captain's attempt at flattery, and his seeming disinterested endeavor to bring about a hasty avowal of love for the young and accomplished and really beautiful lady. So, setting his wits to work, he lost but little time in discovering that the Captain had been under the delightful chains of a Y. M. C. A. for about two weeks, and the pseudo widow was no more or less than the identical, charming, idolized wife of the Captain.

"Now then," says Dodge to himself, "as the Captain has planned a joke he shan't be disappointed; I'll only change, or slightly alter the plot, and if I don't in the end, give him a regular 'eye opener' then he may have the pleasure of telling his friends how he 'done the Yankee up brown.'"

Dodge had something like a week previous, sent on his bills and advertisement to the editors at Natchez, stating that he would be at that stirring little town during the races, and would at fifty cents a ticket treat the inhabitants and visitors with a series of mirthful, musical, and social entertainments.

Not letting any person on board know at what place he intended to stop, telling the captain he would settle his fare when he left the boat, he improved every spare moment with the widow over the music and piano, until the old steamer came pulling alongside of the levee at Natchez.

Ascertaining from the Captain that the steamer would leave in about three quarters of an hour, he gave his baggage in charge of a resident in town, who was about leaving the boat. Then, watching the captain until he had entered the counting room of one of the large stores under the hill, for which he occasionally brought goods from New Orleans, the vocalist immediately went to the captain's wife, and very coolly informed her that, through a mismanagement of one of the agents, the boat would be obliged to remain twenty-four hours at Natchez, and that her husband had accordingly accepted an invitation of some friends to visit the race ground, and wished the vocalist to come up, as soon as convenient, in a carriage, with the Captain's wife. Not dreaming of anything wrong, the lady hastily threw on her shawl and bonnet, and declared herself ready for a start. Stepping on shore Dodge hailed a colored coachman, gave him a shining doubloon, and in a smothered voice ordered him to drive ten miles in an easterly direction, and then, without a single question, turn round, and slowly return.

Leaving Dodge and his fair companion to enjoy their pleasant drive, after a tedious confinement in a noisy and clattering steamer, we will now return to the Captain, who at the appointed time gave the steamer's bell the accustomed number of rings, hauled in the plank, bid a good-day to his friends, and shoved out into the muddy river.

After seeing that the additional freight was well balanced, ropes and chains prop-

erly stowed away, and everything, in sailor's phrase, "all taut," which occupied nearly an hour, the Captain entered the ladies' saloon to scrutinize his new passengers and pass an agreeable half hour with his sweet and affectionate wife.

Not seeing his lady, he repaired to her state-room, where he found the usual variety of out and inside dresses, night-caps, slippers, stockings, etc., but no wife; whereupon, feeling a little uneasy, (the honey moon not yet being passed), a general search was made, from stem to stern, in the old steamboat, but without the least success.

For a moment the Captain stood like a statue. A thought struck him? Where was Dodge?

Some one remarked that he had not been seen since the boat left Natchez.

With the speed of a madman, the Captain rushed to the state room of the Yankee singer, when to his utter astonishment he found that the baggage had all disappeared, and on the bed lay a letter, directed to Captain —, of the steamer B. S. The letter was quickly torn open, when to add still greater fury to his frenzy his eyes fell on the following:—

"DEAR SIR:—Thinking that you might possibly have the pleasure of relating to your friends how you caught Dodge 'napping,' by persuading him to make a declaration of love to your talented and truly accomplished lady, you tried your utmost, both by misrepresentation and personal influence, to get me in the meshes of your skillfully woven net; and thinking that when we are among the Romans do, I have by the same method taken possession of your beautiful wife, without her own or your consent."

"Your lady shall receive the attention and kindness, that none other better than a Bostonian knows how to bestow; and unless you conclude to 'bout ship,' acknowledge the corn, and immediately take possession of the prize, (which between you and myself I consider the most manly and wisest course), I shall if it meets her approval, take her under my charge in the next steamer bound to the Crescent City."

"Yours for fun, let it come at whose expense it may—in a horn."

OSSIAN E. DODGE,
Boston Vocalist.

"P. S. Enclosed you will find the amount of my fare, and inasmuch as I have taken possession of your fair it is perfectly fair that you should take possession of my fair."

In a voice of thunder the Captain gave orders for the action of the engine to be immediately reversed, and taking possession of the pilot house himself, he had for himself an excellent opportunity of cooling himself down into something like a state of reflection and reason.

Being naturally of a generous and lively turn of mind, he was soon obliged to acknowledge to himself that the "infernal Yankee," had outwitted him, and after all, if his wife had received that attention promised in the letter, it would be better not to make a fool of himself, by a great splurge and show, but handsomely acknowledge that he had been whipped by his own weapons; return the vocalist the amount of his fare, and then present him with a life-ticket for the steamer B. S., current at all seasons of the year.

About the time the captain was raging the wildest, Dodge was explaining to his fair companion the manner in which her lawful lord had compromised her honor and dignity by representing her as a widow, and the proper person to receive the addresses of the young men. Little by little the vocalist revealed the complicated plot from beginning to end, until the whole was brought plainly to light.

The lady trembled, wept violently for a few moments, and finally wound up with a merry laugh, exclaiming:

"O, won't he be angry for a few moments? But he's a noble soul, and will, in half an hour afterwards, be willing and happy to forgive and forget; but he shan't forget as long as I have a tongue to hector him! But, Mr. Dodge, hadn't we better have the driver hurry, for the Captain will return immediately on the receipt of your note, I know he will; for, oh, sir, we are very fond of each other—indeed we are."

Dodge ordered the driver to increase his speed, and if he should discover a steamer coming up the river to immediately inform them.

"Da's one comein' now, massa," immediately replied the driver.

"What's her name?" inquired Dodge.

"I reckon, massa, she's from de Norf! Don't know, nigger can't read," rejoined the laughing prince of darkness.

Dodge and his companion immediately took a view of the distant steamer from the window of the coach, and soon satisfied themselves beyond a doubt that she was none other than the identical B. S.

"Whar does massa want nigger drive to now?" inquired the wonder-stricken but respectful driver.

"To Natchez, under the hill," replied Dodge, "and govern yourself according to the speed of yonder steamer, as we wish to board her."

"Yes, sah."

As the bow-line was thrown ashore, Mr. Dodge and the pseudo widow alighted from the carriage, and walked slowly towards the boat. The Captain, overcome with joy, sprang from the taffrail, and soon had his bride clasped in his arms.—After a kiss and a few words in private, he turned round to Dodge, who stood looking on, like one convinced he had no right to enjoy the scene, and exclaimed:

"My dear fellow, this is happiness, and no mistake; but I'll own up that I've been sold, completely sold; and that you're too many for me altogether! And now, sir, if you'll promise me that you'll never relate the facts of this case south of Mason's and Dixon's line, you shall receive a ticket which shall entitle you to a cabin passage on my boat from the present time to the fall of 1895."

"I am much obliged to you, Captain, for the offer," replied Dodge, "but should prefer not to accept it, as jokes that are paid for are not, as a general thing, so long remembered, or so well enjoyed, as those founded on affection for the vidders."

"Hit again, by the great father of waters," exclaimed the Captain, "but I'm now behind time, and must hurry off; so God bless you, my dear fellow, but don't amid the exciting scenes in concertizing, ever forget Captain —, or the steamer B. S., or your elopement with another man's wife."

On his arrival at New Orleans, the vocalist found a letter in the post-office, containing, together with the good wishes of the Captain and wife, an elaborately finished and massive gold ring, on which was engraved the Captain's name and residence, and underneath, in very fine lettering, the simple, but expressive word—"Sold."

Dodge showed us the ring, and amid the shouts of the fraternity exclaimed:

"Boys, I have preserved this ring with great care and attention for a wedding gift, but haven't yet found the woman who had the courage to offer herself, and it's all nonsense for me to mention the subject, for they'd insist upon it 'Old Dodge' was coming of his jokes."

RANDOLPH'S DUEL WITH CLAY.

The night before the duel, Mr. Randolph sent for me. I found him calm, but in a singularly kind and confiding mood. He told me that he had something on his mind to tell me. He then remarked,

"Hamilton, I have determined to receive, without returning, Clay's fire; nothing shall induce me to harm a hair of his head; I will not make his wife a widow, or his children orphans. Their tears would be shed over his grave; but when the soil of Virginia rests on my bosom, there is not in this wide world one individual to pay this tribute upon mine."

His eyes filled, and, resting his head upon his hand, we remained some moments silent. I replied,

"My dear friend," (for ours was a sort of posthumous friendship, bequeathed by our mothers,) "I deeply regret that you have mentioned this subject to me; for you call upon me to go to the field and see you shot down, or to assume the responsibility, in regard to your own life, in sustaining your determination to throw it away. But on this subject, a man's own conscience and his own bosom are his best monitors. I will not advise, but under the enormous and unprovoked personal insult you have offered Mr. Clay, I cannot dissuade. I feel bound, however, to communicate to Colonel Tattall your decision."

He begged me not to do so, and said "he was very much afraid that Tattall would take the studs and refuse to go out with him."

I, however, sought Col. Tattall, and we repaired about midnight to Mr. Randolph's lodgings, whom we found reading Milton's great poem. For some moments he did not permit us to say one word in relation to the approaching duel; and he at once commenced one of those delightful criticisms on a passage of this poet, in which he was wont so enthusiastically to indulge. After a pause, Col. Tattall remarked,

"Mr. Randolph, I am told you are determined not to return Mr. Clay's fire; I must say to you, my dear sir, if I am only to go out to see you shot down, you must find some other friend."

Mr. Randolph remarked that it was his determination.

After some conversation on the subject, I induced Col. Tattall to allow Mr. Randolph to take his own course, as his withdrawal, as one of his friends, might

lead to very injurious misconstructions.—At last, Mr. Randolph, smiling, said,

"Well, Tattall, I promise you one thing, if I see the devil in Clay's eye, and that with malice prepense he means to take my life, I may change my mind."

A remark I know he made merely to propitiate the anxieties of his friend.

Mr. Clay and himself met at four o'clock the succeeding evening, on the banks of the Potomac. But he saw "no devil in Clay's eye," but a man fearless, and expressing the mingled sensibility and firmness which belonged to the occasion.

I shall never forget this scene as long as I live. It has been my misfortune to witness several duels, but I never saw one, at least in its sequel, so deeply affecting. The sun was just setting behind the blue hills of Randolph's own Virginia. Here were two of the most extraordinary men our country in its prodigality had produced, about to meet in mortal combat. Whilst Tattall was loading Randolph's pistols, I approached my friend, I believed, for the last time. I took his hand; there was not in its touch the quivering of one pulsation. He turned to me and said,

"Clay is calm, but not vindictive—I hold my purpose, Hamilton, in any event; remember this."

On handing him his pistol, Col. Tattall sprang the hair-trigger. Mr. Randolph said,

"Tattall, although I am one of the best shots in Virginia with either a pistol or gun, yet I never fire with the hair-trigger; besides, I have a thick buckskin glove on, which will destroy the delicacy of my touch, and the trigger may fly before I know where I am."

But, from his great solicitude for his friend, Tattall insisted upon having the trigger. On taking their position, the fact turned out as Mr. Randolph anticipated; his pistol went off before the word, with the muzzle down.

The moment this event took place, Gen. Jesup, Mr. Clay's friend, called out that he would instantly leave the ground with his friend, if that occurred again.—Mr. Clay at once exclaimed "It was an accident, and begged that the gentleman might be allowed to go on. On the word being given, Mr. Clay fired without effect, Mr. Randolph discharging his pistol in the air. The moment Mr. Clay saw that Mr. Randolph had thrown away his fire, with a gush of sensibility he instantly approached Mr. Randolph, and said, with an emotion I can never forget,

"I trust in God, my dear sir, you are untouched; after what has occurred, I would not have harmed you for a thousand worlds."—Hamilton's Life of Randolph.

A SIBERIAN WINTER.

A traveller gives the following description of a Siberian winter:—

The traveller in Siberia, during the winter, is so enveloped in furs that he can scarcely move; and under the thick fur hood, which is fastened to the bear skin collar and covers the whole face, one can draw in, as it were by stealth, a little of the external air, which is so keen that it causes a very peculiar and painful feeling to the throat and lungs. The distance from one halting place to another takes about ten hours, during which time the traveller must always continue on horseback, as the cumbersome dress makes it insupportable to wade through the snow.

The poor horses suffer at least as much as their riders, for besides the general effect of the cold, they are tormented by ice forming in their nostrils and stopping their breathing. When they intimate this by a distressed snort and a convulsive shaking of the head, the drivers relieve them by taking out the pieces of ice, to save them from being suffocated. When the icy ground is not covered with snow, their hoofs often burst from the effect of the cold. The caravan is always surrounded by a thick cloud of vapor; it is not only living bodies that produce this effect, but even the snow smokes. These evaporations are instantly changed into millions of needles of ice, which fill the air, and cause a constant slight noise, resembling the sound of torn satin or thick silk. Even the reindeer seeks the forest to protect himself from the intensity of the cold. In the tundras where there is no shelter to be found, the whole herd crowd together as close as possible to gain a little warmth from each other and may be seen standing in this way quite motionless. Only the dark bird of winter, the raven, still cleaves the icy air with slow and heavy wing, leaving behind him a long track of his solitary flight. The influence of the cold extends even to inanimate nature. The thickest trunks of trees are rent asunder with a loud sound which, in these deserts, falls on the ear like a signal shot at sea; large masses of rocks are torn from their ancient sites;—the ground in the tundras and the rocky valleys, cracks, forming wide yawning fissures from which the waters, which were be-

neath the surface, rise, giving off a cloud of vapor, and becomes immediately changed into ice. The effect of this degree of cold extends even beyond the earth. The beauty of the deep polar star, so often and so justly praised, disappears in the dense atmosphere which the intensity of cold produces. The stars will glisten in the firmament, but their brilliancy is dimmed.

AMERICAN VANITY.

We are not at all surprised, says Frazer's English Magazine, at what in this country is most foolishly called the conceit and vanity of the Americans. What people in the world have so fine, so magnificent a country? Besides, that, they have some reason to be proud of themselves. We have given the chief features of their eastern and inland territory; if the reader has any imagination for ideas of this kind, let him picture to himself what will be the aspect of things when the tide of population has crossed the long range of the Rocky Mountains, and occupying the valleys of the western coast, has built other Bostons and New Yorks on the harbors of Oregon and California. This vast crowd of ever onward pressing settlers is not formed of the same materials as the inhabitants of an European province: that is, there are not at its head a few intelligent but delicately brought up men of capital, whilst all the rest are ignorant laborers; but every one of these pioneers of civilization can handle the axe and the rifle, and can "calculate." If ever these magnificent dreams of the American people are realized—an all that is wanted for their realization is that things should only go on as they have been going on for the last two centuries—there will be seated upon that vast continent a population greater than that of all Europe, and speaking the same language, all active-minded, intelligent and well off. They will stand, as it were, the centre of the world, between the two great oceans, with Europe on one hand and Asia on the other. With such a future before him, we must pardon the Yankee if we find a little dash of self-complacency in his composition; and bear with the surprise and annoyance which he expresses at finding we know so little of himself or of his country. Our humble opinion is that we ought to know better. Great as is the influence which America has already had upon Europe, we conceive that this is a mere intimation of the influence it is destined to have upon the world.

FLORIDA AND THE UNION.

The committee on Federal Relations in the House of Representatives of Florida, made a long report on the 28th ult. It echoes most of the sentiments of the South Carolina extremists, but the Committee say they are not prepared to recommend secession or revolution on account of the compromise measures. They present a series of resolutions, in which they declare that Florida will adhere to the Union, if the Northern States "cease from further aggressions and observe the other obligations of the Federal Compact. They declare, further, that on the preservation and faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, depends the perpetuity of the Union and that its repeal or essential modification will make it the duty of the State authorities to summon a convention, for the assertion and defence of their rights.

WEARING AWAY.

A few evenings since another mass of rock was dislodged from the brink of the precipice at Niagara Falls, and plunged into the abyss below. The portion which has gone this time was from the bed of the river, beneath where a canalboat had been lying for the past year. The mass was some eight rods long and as many wide, and occupies and fills up the path way to Tegenmeyer Rock. The crash of the fall was heard distinctly for more than a mile, and in the immediate vicinity of the Falls it seemed to shake old earth to her centre. Thus we have daily evidence that the Falls are wearing away, and ages hence the great wonder of the world may be alongside of our goodly city.—Buffalo Express.

"Not long since," writes an old friend and correspondent, "as I was returning from Buffalo, I was amused, while the cars made a momentary stop, at a demonstration made by a crazy man, on his way to the State Lunatic Asylum, at Utica. He was standing on the track, in front of the iron horse: 'You think you are something!' he said, looking wildly at the locomotive, and assuming a boxing attitude; 'but look o'here: I can whip you! I've flogged the fiery bulls of Bashan, and broken their horns off! Say! don't stand there, whistling and smoking, like a blackguard in a bar-room; jest jump into me, and I'll take the conceit out of you, you d—d old cooking-stone on wheels!'"